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the water. On each side of each torch-bearer goes a man armed with bow and arrows; for small fish the arrows have heads like the handles of spoons, but for large fish they use arrows with heads with only one wing and barb, like an ordinary arrow-head bisected from point to shank. The torch-bearers and bowmen wade up against the current, and the fish, which at night are feeding in these shallows and not in the deep pools, are attracted or stupefied by the glare and are easily shot with the arrows or caught in the basket.'

### *E. Intoxicants and Other Drinks*

The commonest intoxicant in the Abujhmar hills is the fermented juice of the sago-palm (*Caryota urens*), and the tree is common also in many parts of the Bison-horn Maria country. It is now propagated freely by Hill and Bison-horn Marias. The tree, unlike the toddy-palm, is monoecious. The flowering peduncles, which appear like thin elephant trunks, have their ends cut off before they flower, and act as taps, bamboo tubes being fastened below the cut to catch the sap; the Bison-horn Marias often use earthenware pots. The tubes are emptied in the morning and evening, bamboo poles still retaining the stumps of side-shoots being tied on to the trees as rough ladders. When fresh, the sap is not intoxicating and has a pleasant dry taste, not unlike champagne. After two or three years' tapping the tree dies, when the inner tissue of the stem yields the starchy food substance already mentioned. If the ends of the peduncle get worm- or grub-eaten before they are tapped, it is considered a sure sign of witchcraft, and more than one murder has been recorded on this account. The bottom of the trunk of the dead tree is commonly used as the hollow body of the Hill Maria single-membrane *turam* or kettle-drums.

**Sago-palm**

The toddy-palm (*Borassus flabellifer*) is not grown or tapped in the Abujhmar hills, but is common in the south of the Bison-horn country especially among the so-called Koyas and the Dorlas, and in Sukma and Konta. In this teluguized region whole villages camp out in the toddy groves from March till June in a perpetual state of semi-intoxication, taking solid food only in the evening, and sometimes going without that for three or four days or even a week. The sap is tapped by cutting the ends of the flowering spadices, in much the same way as the sago-palm; the spadix appears in the male trees from November to March, while the female tree yields sap from April to June. The vessels used to catch the sap are generally thick bamboo tubes three or four feet long, of about three gallons capacity. Excessive tapping soon shortens the life of the trees. The juice rapidly ferments, though not intoxicating when drawn, and fermentation is expedited by the habit of mixing the fresh juice with that left

**Toddy-palm**

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nostrums like the use of red-ants for fever or python-flesh for pot-belly already mentioned, and cauterization is the only treatment he knows for simple injuries or foot-crack (just as he brands the flanks of ailing cattle). A Maria bitten by a rabid dog at His Excellency Sir Montagu Butler's Christmas camp at Kondagaon in 1927 refused point blank to be sent out of Bastar to Raipur for Pasteur treatment, but ultimately as a concession to the general anxiety asked to be given the body of the dog, and ate its liver.[1] To Marias illness is generally a manifestation of something malignant, either the magic of a human enemy or the ill-will of a god or spirit. At funerals, steps are taken to ascertain whether magic was the cause of death; in illness a medium is called in, or a *wede* or *gunia* with knowledge either of spells to defeat the spirits of evil or of the white magic means of blowing away illness, *jhara phukna*; epidemic or epizootic disease may be defeated either by palisading the village after sweeping it clean, and posting guards with bows and arrows to shoot the demons of illness, as was done by Hill Marias in the great influenza epidemic of 1918, or by special disease-riddance ceremonies like the annual ceremony described on page 140. Yet such is the Hindu's faith in their 'medicine' that in 1930 the late zamindar of Sukma hastened his death when in the last stages of diabetes by taking the advice of Bison-horn Maria 'doctors' or *gunia* to the effect that he had two intestines, one of which had withered like a dead plant, while the other, though withering, was still partly green and could be revived if the patient fed it with lumps of black earth.

**Maria treatment of disease**

### *B. Manufactures*

In the preceding chapters frequent mention has been made of basketry, for Maria measures, grain bins, walls of houses and fences, dancing shields and so on. The Hill Marias are great basket workers, men and women. The men make all the big basketry bins for storing grain and the large baskets sold at the markets, as well as dancing shields and fencing and matting; the women make the basketry measures, basketry plates and the smaller domestic baskets, as well as brooms of various grasses, which are generally plaited together at the top by basketry methods. In camps, Hill Maria youths almost invariably employ any spare time in basket-making. Bison-horn Marias on the contrary leave it almost entirely to their women, except that the men make the basketry caps that are the basis of the *tallagulla* bison-horn dancing headdress, and fencing.

**1. Basketry**

[1] [See cat. 116, p. 421. - AWA 45F]

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cultivators. In some cases they had obtained cultivators' daughters as wives; but these appeared all to be run-away matches without the consent of the girls' parents; in other cases cultivators had become blacksmiths in order to marry blacksmiths' daughters. Halba and Telanga neighbours refer to them often as Kammar by caste; but so far as the word can be used of them, it is clearly rather an occupational term. Yet for some reason the aboriginal everywhere looks down on the smith, and as soon as a Maria takes to this occupation he must live with his fellow-smiths either in a separate village or hamlet, or segregated in a separate part of the village.

Almost all parts of Bastar are full of iron ore, some of it among the finest and purest in the world. But the Maria smiths cannot deal in their rough smelting furnaces with anything but the friable haematite ores, yellow ochre in colour, which they either collect where it lies in exposed lumps or dig from shallow hillside pits. As the ore is a part of the soil, and the soil is the property of the clan-priest vested in the *kasyeq-gaita* of a Hill Maria or the *perma* of a Bison-horn village, the chief of the smiths has to ask the permission of the *kasyeq-gaita* or *perma* to dig ore just as the relatives of a man of another clan dying in the village have to ask his permission to bury the man in the clan-earth. The smiths have generally to pay for this permission by contributing a sacrificial pig at the annual harvest-home festival of the clan-god; and at this festival the smiths pray to the clan-god to give them good iron in the coming year. If smelting produces bad iron, witchcraft is at once suspected, and a medium consulted. Men, women and children mine or collect the ore, which is soft enough to be dug easily with the ordinary hoe, and broken up with the blunt end of the pointed hammer (*mutti*) used by all Maria smiths. It may be added here that they get an annual fee in grain at harvest from all Maria villagers, in return for which they are expected to sharpen, re-temper or repair tools and weapons, and a fee, generally in grain, for all new tools and weapons. They also manufacture for direct sale in the markets.

Having collected the ore, the smith collects a supply of bark for roasting the ore before smelting, and makes a supply of charcoal (*bugi*). For the former purpose he prefers the bark of the sacred *saja* tree, and the roasting changes the colour of the ore from yellow ochre to deep burnt sienna. For smelting he makes charcoal from *karra* wood, unless he can get tamarind, and for refining from *mahua* wood. It takes two or three men a day to cut the wood; they use green *karra* logs eighteen inches or two feet in girth, and dead *mahua* wood. They cut up the *karra* into billets about eighteen inches long,

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753 is that it is caused by magic and best cured by detection of the magician, or by white counter-magic.

761 Black magic is still suspected as the cause of death by all Marias. Bison-horn Marias consider it proved if, when they return
154 next day to the pyre where they left a corpse burning, they find part of the body unburnt. Hill Marias, through a *waddai* clan-priest
[197] or his medium assistant, call on the corpse to impel its bearers to one of seven leaves that represent the possible causes of death; three of these leaves represent the magic of a fellow-villager, the magic of a *waddai* or medium, and the magic of a man at enmity with the deceased owing to a quarrel. All log-gods, whether Maria clan-gods or the various Anga-deo and Pat-deo of the Halbas and Murias, have the power of detecting witchcraft, either by impelling their bearers to the offender (the usual way among non-Marias) or through their oracles the *waddai* (or *wadde* or *wadde*). In previous chapters we have seen witchcraft regarded as the cause of the blacksmith's iron ore[1] failing to produce good iron when smelted, and of the spoiling of the flowering peduncles of the *salphi* tree[2] by worms and grubs. In fact, again to quote Glasfurd[3]:—

> 'The people invariably impute their misfortunes to witchcraft. If a man's bullock dies, it is caused by witchcraft; if his crops fail, it is because the land has been bewitched by someone who is at enmity with the owner; a lingering sickness or painful disease is laid at the door of an enemy, and, in short, from the most common affairs of everyday life to the most serious, every evil that befalls a family is imputed to witchcraft.'

674 Suspected witchcraft was the cause of eight out of the eighteen
154 murders committed between 1917 and 1923 by Bison-horn Marias
683 and of the two murders committed by Hill Marias; it was the alleged cause in the one Hill Maria and six of the eleven Bison-horn Maria murder cases which I tried between 1927 and 1931 as *ex-officio* Sessions Judge. Glasfurd[3] went on to give details of the cruel treatment meted out in his day to persons suspected of witchcraft; the final test applied to a suspect, even if the preliminary test had been in his favour, was to sew him up in a sack, and duck him in waist-deep water, adjudging him guilty if in his struggles for life he managed to raise himself above the water; he was then beaten by the crowd, his head shaved, and his front teeth knocked out with a stone, to prevent him muttering his incantations. He was pelted with all kinds of filth, made to eat degrading food, and driven out of the country. But, with one exception, in none of the many murder and assault cases arising out of suspected witchcraft which occurred while I was in Bastar and of the previous cases of which I have notes was any action taken by Maria village communities

[1] See p. 176. [2] See p. 168. [3] Report, pp. 32-4.

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to molest suspects. There were cases from Muria and Bhattra villages where the community inflicted degrading punishments only somewhat less cruel than those of Glasfurd's day; but in all but one of the Maria cases the man who believed himself wronged acted entirely on his own, often after consulting the god through a *waddai* medium, and killed or tried to kill the suspect with any weapon that came handy. The exception was the 1916 Hill Maria murder at Orcha, in which many villagers combined against the *pargana* headman, who, like his father before him, was said to have been expert in the black art, and to have used it and his position as headman to set up a '*raj*' over the *pargana*. They combined to seize him at night, crushed his testicles and hanged him from a creeper. [A] Nor were women ever suspected in Maria cases, although in three cases among Jagdalpur Murias and Bhattras women suspects were very roughly handled. In two Bison-horn murders it was clear that the murdered man had threatened his murderer to bewitch him, and one of these blackmailers was himself a *waddai*. In fact, the *waddai* is generally believed by the Bison-horn Marias to know black magic as well as white magic and divination, and is apt to be feared accordingly.

It is naturally difficult to ascertain the methods believed to be used by the black magician; those who imagined they had suffered judged the fact solely from the nature of their sufferings, the word of the *waddai* consulted as to their source, and, perhaps, the known enmity of the suspect towards them, while naturally no practitioner of black magic cared to admit it or to describe his methods. Black magic is commonly referred to as *pangan*; and popular talk confirms the methods described at page 43 of the *Gazetteer*:—

> 'Whenever an enemy's life is to be taken, a bit of his cloth or hair is offered to a god with some incantations consisting of a string of names of godlings, and the victim should then pine away, unless he in turn calls in a magician. This practice is locally called *kuda marna*. Another plan is for the magician to put up two bits of grass tied in the form of a cross to represent his client's enemy, and, after going through incantations, shoot at the little figure with a miniature bow and arrow made of grass. If the arrow hits the mark it is believed that the enemy will surely die, unless he has recourse to magic to avert the spell.'

The information on which this was based came from the mixed Hill and Bison-horn Maria country around Barsur, and the word 'magician' is a translation of '*waddai*'.

**White Magic**

The white magic in vogue is merely the counter-magic used by a friendly *waddai* to avert or cure illness and disease. Of actual Hill Maria methods I obtained no notes; but certain *waddais* or *leshis* have a much greater reputation than others. I gather that Hill Maria methods do not differ from those in vogue among Bison-horn Marias and Murias, in which

[A] [See ch. 11, pp. 423-424. — Ed.]

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indeed it must be confessed that the Maria belief in Mahapurub is weaker than in other tribes. The Sun and Moon were created, not by him, but by human beings. Fire was not given—as in so many legends—to the world by God, but was discovered by man in a more or less natural way in a broken stone or a split bamboo. In only one of the folk-tales does Mahapurub play a part. In this he teaches the hero how to make a hearth and gives him a magic bel stick. He refuses to answer the prayer of a bird which begs him to restore its mate to life.

On the whole, we may conclude that while the Marias undoubtedly believe in some kind of Supreme Deity, he is not vividly imagined by them, and his cult is overlaid by the interest and excitement aroused by the earth-bound deities like Danteshwari and the clan-gods and by the attention that must be given to the Departed.

## III

The general pattern of Maria magical beliefs has been traced by Grigson and his picture may be supplemented by my chapter on 'Witchcraft and Magic' in *Maria Murder and Suicide*. A few additional notes may be of interest.

The dread of witchcraft and black magic seems to me to be stronger among the Marias than in the other primitive populations of Middle India. Among the neighbouring Bondos, for example, it is comparatively weak and hardly troubles the deeply religious Saoras whose attention is concentrated on pacifying the Dead.

In Maria opinion, the practitioner of black magic is frequently a widow, often a rigrish widow. Her chief delight is to interfere with other people's pleasures; she sends grubs into the spathe of the sago palm and thus checks the supply of the refreshing juice; she loves to rob a fresh young girl of her rightful joys by prolonging her menstrual periods; she frustrates men's happiness by making them impotent; she blights the marriage-bed with barrenness. These wanton and jealous widows are a great nuisance in Maria society. Oyami Anda of Bara Harmamunda told me how he was pestered by one of them but, since he had two wives already, did not want to be involved in a scandal, and in any case was not attracted, he rejected her advances. In revenge she nearly killed him with black magic. Another old Oyami Maria insisted that it was only a widow who could perform this magic; as a young man such a woman had begged him to lie with her and when he refused had made him impotent. At Kuchepal I met a man who had once engaged himself in that most dangerous of erotic adventures, a love-affair with a widow. After a time he wearied of her and in

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revenge she 'destroyed his seed'. For several years he was unable to get a child, though in the end the Perma diagnosed the trouble and after the proper sacrifices his wife conceived. 754

A number of recent murders were due either to the desire of a victim to be revenged on a witch or wizard or to a man's resentment at being accused of sorcery. The Orcha murder of 1941 was due to a Hill Maria called Mukka suspecting that the Gaita, Pidche, was practising sorcery against him. After killing him he put the corpse in a stream, but next day recovered and buried it, the whole village agreeing to hush the matter up. The following year Podiyami Doma of Michnar killed Kuharami Konda during a New Eating Festival because the latter accused him of being a thief and a sorcerer. On November 26th, 1941 Gumma Karwe, a young Bison-horn Maria, killed his uncle Gumma Galla at Toinar. Only three months previously Karwe had been married. One day his young wife went with his father and step-mother to visit relations at Gummalnar, a journey that took them over the Indrawati. It was October and I well remember the heavy floods that year. The water swept away the canoe in which they were crossing the river and the bodies were never recovered. A month later, while uncle and nephew were drinking palm wine together they began to quarrel. The younger man accused his uncle of causing the death of his wife, on whom he had spent twenty rupees in cash and three measures of paddy, by magic. Galla admitted it, even boasted of it, and threatened to kill him in the same way. The boy, wild with rage and fear, killed Galla forthwith by a heavy blow from his axe. 674 754 578

At the beginning of March 1944, one evening as the crescent moon was rising above the eastern horizon, there was a violent quarrel in Barse Bendo's house at Kadampal, and a few hours later one of the disputants crept out of his house and stabbed his enemy to death with an arrow as he lay asleep. Barse Bendo was a well-known and successful magician with a large practice. In the same village a youngish man called Kunjami Gota set up as a Siraha and seems to have succeeded in drawing away some of Bendo's patients and creating a sense of rivalry and opposition. Gota's own uncle, Kunjami Tonda, however, preferred the treatment of the older and more experienced man, and when his wife Mate fell ill at the beginning of 1944 he took her to Bendo, and not to his nephew, for consultation. She soon recovered, but shortly afterwards Tonda's two little sons, Lakhma and Bala, fell ill and he came with his whole family to stay in a leaf-hut built for patients in Bendo's compound. Bala was cured in a day or two, but Lakhma, who had a swollen face, did not improve. Here was Bendo's chance. At the time of divination he skilfully introduced the name of Gota

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into his ravings and afterwards declared that it had been revealed to him that the child's illness had been caused by the evil influence of his rival whom he now denounced as a Pangnaha or sorcerer. Gota was summoned to the house and when he came Tonda—prompted by Bendo—asked him to perform antidotal magic to undo the harm he had done and so cure the little boy. This was a clever move. If Gota agreed he became a self-confessed Pangnaha; if he refused to treat a patient, Bendo would see to it that his reputation as a Siraha was destroyed. Gota chose the safer course, and declared that he knew nothing about the treatment of the sick. They all protested at this, reminding him how they had seen him curing disease by *mana-bujha* and sprinkling rice on the heads of ailing children. Tonda said, 'Bendo has cured Bala, but he can't do anything for Lakhma. You are a new man and have cured other people's children. Now cure your own cousin.' But Gota still refused. This made Tonda furious, for the refusal confirmed his suspicion, so carefully fostered by the jealous and wily Bendo, that Gota himself was responsible for the trouble, and that in fact he was an impostor, not a Siraha at all, but a mere Pangnaha. He lost control of himself and began to shout insults and accusations at his nephew, saying that he was trying to kill his own cousins and was of such unbearable wickedness that even when he was found out he would do nothing to remedy matters. In the quarrel the two men came to blows, but they were separated and Gota was taken back to his house. The others went to sleep and Tonda lay down outside the little hut where his wife watched by the sick child. But Gota, angry and brooding over the accusation which he knew well would spoil his practice as a Siraha and thus ruin him economically as well as socially, waited for some hours and then crept into Bendo's compound and stabbed Tonda to death with an arrow. Gota was brought to trial and sentenced to ten years' imprisonment, escaping the gallows partly in consequence of a passage (on p. xxvi) in *Maria Murder and Suicide* which was quoted in the judgement.

To understand the Japgunda murder of 1943 a certain amount of family history must be related. Masa, a Hill Maria of Japgunda, had two brothers Gai and Bija. When Gai died, leaving a widow and a daughter Muri, his younger brother inherited the widow along with the property and adopted a boy named Erka as a Lamana'i to work for his step-daughter. When the period of service was complete, Erka and Muri were married and both continued to live in Bija's house until in due time Erka succeeded, on Bija's death, to control of the household and became guardian of Bija's three little sons, Suku, Gilu and Aga.

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Masa, the children's uncle and sole survivor of the elder branch of the family, was the Waddai of the clan-god of Japgunda. He seems to have resented the way a poor Lamana'i boy like Erka had risen in the world and become owner of both his brothers' property, and there was some tension in the relations between the two houses. For five or six years, Erka had had good crops and Masa bad ones, and Masa decided that his failure must be due to the fact that Erka was practising magic against him. One day he openly accused the younger man of sorcery and challenged him to an ordeal. Erka, who had no desire to quarrel, accepted and a pot of boiling water and cowdung was prepared. Erka dipped his fingers into it and was badly burned.

This incident convinced the villagers that Erka was a sorcerer and had a curious effect on his own character. He found that, far from being a social outcaste, he—the poor Lamana'i boy—was believed to have the ear of the goddess Parkal Muttai and that many people were coming to him for advice and help. He grew proud and arrogant and when he caused the death of a calf, a pig and a fowl belonging to Masa, no one dared to remonstrate with him. Bija's little boys were growing up and Erka built a house of his own near by. Presently Aga was to be married and some time late in August 1943 the wedding was held in Bija's old house. Masa was, of course, invited but on his way to join the festivities—for the essence of a Hill Maria marriage is a dance, a drink and a heavy meal—Erka went out to intercept him. He greeted him pleasantly and showing him a gourd of rice-beer took him aside to drink with him on the bank of the village pond. Some time later boys coming in their finery for the marriage dance saw the two men sitting together by the water under a virgin moon. The next day Masa's mutilated body was found in the pond.

Erka immediately used his reputation as a sorcerer to hush the matter up. He called the elders to his house, bribed the Kotwar whose duty it was to report suspicious deaths to the police, and taking the headman and another person of some influence aside, sat them down and drew on the ground what was described at the trial as a 'magic line'. He put dub grass, a knife and a bit of cowdung on it and two rupees on one side and three rupees on the other. Then he asked the two men to pick up the money, saying that this act bound them to secrecy. Deeply impressed, the headman went out and told the other villagers that they must cremate the body at once and make no report to the authorities. On the way to the pyre the usual divination by *sāja* leaves was performed and indicated that Masa had died by violence. It was five months before rumours of the crime reached the police.

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I do not in any way emphasize it, but it seems to me curious that many crimes connected with sorcery are associated with water; they are performed on the banks of ponds or rivers and in several instances the body has been thrown into the water afterwards. Does a murderer who has killed a sorcerer believe that there is some spiritual antiseptic for him in throwing his victim's body into water?

IV

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Grigson has studied in detail the custom of the Hill Marias in regard to menstruation, pregnancy and birth, but his notes on the Bison-horn Marias need, as he says, 'considerable supplementing'. The Bison-horn Marias have the curious belief that men, not women, were originally subject to a menstrual period. They used to tie hollow bamboos to their organs to catch the discharge. Once—according to one legend—a girl was laughing at a man in this distressing and inconvenient condition, and he lost his temper and threw the bamboo at her; in another story a sister wanted to help her brother, who could not cut his clearing properly on account of the bamboo tagged on in front of him, and offered to take it instead.

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Yet other legends ascribe the origin of menstruation to a wound. There were formerly teeth in the vagina and when these were removed, the wound was not wholly healed. Once the vagina was in the crick of the leg behind the knee—you can still see its shape—but a hen pecked at it and the frightened organ jumped for safety to its hiding-place between the thighs. But it was hurt and it still bleeds every month at the recollection.

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All the Gond tribes are very strict about the menstrual taboos, in this contrasting sharply with the Orissa Bondos, Gadabas, and Saoras, who are at a similar stage of culture and live not very far away. Grigson has described the extreme rigorism of the Hill Marias and has rightly suggested that the Bison-horn Marias are somewhat less apprehensive of the dangers of menstruation. But they too, like the Murias and the Gonds generally, are strict enough in their application of the taboo and breach of it may be punished by the Departed through the bite of a snake or the destruction of the harvest. They do not usually build special menstruation huts, but sometimes where there is a girls' dormitory, menstruating women sleep on one side of the hut and unmarried girls on the other. In such villages, no married woman may go near the dormitory nor should youths enter it. Not all dormitories however are used in this way.

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Elsewhere part of the veranda of the ordinary living-house is screened off or a little hut is built in the compound for the use of

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a woman at this time. At the menarche (for which the word used is *kumar sāta*, 'the blossoming of the flower'), however, a special hut is built for the girl by women outside the village. A woman of the household brings her food and sleeps with her at night; she must bathe whenever she returns to the house. In some villages, the Marias still make a platform up a tree for the girl, who during the day must hide herself in the forest. 841 881

It is very dangerous for anyone to see, let alone to touch, a girl at her menarche. At Tikanpal I was told that if a man saw such a girl as he went through the jungle he should slap her and then go to her parents and after rebuking them, demand a fowl which he should sacrifice; then he should bathe and anoint himself with oil. At Gadapal they said that a man should throw a lump of earth between his legs at the girl, or a stick over his shoulder, and then go home and bathe. Neglect of these precautions might lead to blindness. 881 783 841

At the end of the period—all this refers only to the first period—the girl destroys her hut or platform during the night, throws away her cloth,[1] bathes and returns home before cockcrow. In some villages she is expected to remain for a day or two longer on the veranda of her house: if she has a married elder brother, it is the special duty of his wife to attend to her. Then she puts oil and turmeric on her body—an act which is said to symbolize her formal re-admission into caste, for during the previous days she has been regarded as excommunicated. In many Maria villages, however, the ceremonial use of turmeric is still unknown, and the elder brother's wife carries a pot of water round the house and sprinkles everyone saying, 'Now you are back again in caste'. After this the girl fetches water in an earthen pot and cowdungs the floor. In the evening her father invites some of the elders to a bottle of liquor and says, 'My daughter who was unclean all these days is now clean again'. He sacrifices a fowl to the Departed and they feast on its flesh. 881 841 783 [607] [769]

There is not nearly so much fuss about the later periods. The woman has to keep out of the way, but there is no danger in looking at her, and when it is over she just has a bath and resumes her ordinary duties. But even so her daily programme is considerably disturbed. She must not sleep inside the house and, of course, sexual intercourse is strictly forbidden. She must not cook or fetch water or go to work in the fields. She must not touch cattle, pigs 841

[1] There do not seem to be any special taboos associated with this cloth. But the leaf-cups from which the girl eats at this time are charged with magical potency and if a witch can get hold of these she can afflict the girl with palsy. [754] 789

eyes; it throws down grass from the roof. But no one need ever be afraid of the ghost of a chelik or motiari.'

During the bazaar ceremonies in the east of the State (when these are performed for a dead chelik or motiari) the villagers say, 'Mahapurub sent you into this world only for a little while; he did not intend you to live with us for long; so don't be angry and don't trouble us'. The parents are led round the shops and then go home leaving the Uriya-bhut in the bazaar. The dead boy or girl is not mingled with the Departed as are the married, and no menhir is erected for them.

Sometimes the ghost of a chelik may be dangerous. In the compound of the Khutgaon ghotul there was formerly a great stone. One of the boys died and the ghost came to sit on it bringing an epidemic with him. Many boys and girls died and the ghotul had to be destroyed and rebuilt in another place. But the stone remained where it was and when the villagers tried to move it sickness broke out again and so they left it alone.

Many Muria say that when an unmarried girl dies her ghost is dangerous because if a witch can get hold of it, she gives it the form of a pretty girl and sends her to rob men of their seed. Such a girl may appear as a man's mother or sister and torment him.

A dead motiari may also continue to visit her old friends of the ghotul. This only happens, however, when the boys sleep outside, for it is believed that Lingo protects the actual building from the invasion of any witch or spirit. The Sirdarsingh of the Chargaon ghotul told me how he once had an encounter with such a ghost. 'She visited me and I went to her; for many days she was with me; I could not get rid of her. I often went to her and my clothes were spoilt with my discharges. At last I gave her a comb and necklace and she went away, but for fear she may return I sacrifice a pig every year.' So too motiari complain of visits from some old lover's ghost: 'he comes to us, pressing us'.

### III. The Soul and its Fate

The belief in immortality, or at least in some kind of survival after death, is bound up with the idea of the soul. The Muria theologians say explicitly that a man has two or even three souls (*jiwa*). In Bakulwahi the villagers said that after death one of these souls[1] went to Mahapurub, one became a Hanal and lived in the Pot of the Departed, and the third became a Chhaiya or Shade, a ghost that visited his relatives in dreams and often made himself a nuisance. The word Hanal, as Grigson has pointed out, is literally translated 'The Departed', for it is a past participial form of the Gondi verb *handdna*, to go.[2] Whenever I speak of the Departed, therefore, it may be taken as translating Hanal in original. In Randhna the people said that,

> Every man has two souls: one lives in his mouth and one in his body—you can feel it going *duk-duk* in the chest. The first soul goes from the mouth direct to Mahapurub; the other remains in the corpse and goes with the mourners to the grave. It watches the body being burnt or buried from a tree nearby, then goes to the nearest stream and lives there until the people come and catch it in the form of a fish and take it home. Then it lives in the house as a god (*deo*).

So also in Amgaon, the Jhoria Muria of the Abujhmar foothills said that,

> A man has two souls: one always remains with him; the other, a smaller one, leaves him in sleep and its adventures are what we call

[1] Throughout, when I use the word 'soul' it represents *jiwa* in the original.
[2] Grigson, op. cit., p. 223.

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members of the clan should be erected, if possible, in its neighbourhood. At Phunder there is a bamboo bundle containing a small earthen pot hanging above the Anga of the Maravi clan. When any Maravi dies his relatives carry his *jiwa* there, open the bamboo bundle and sacrifice a chicken above it, allowing the blood to fall into the pot. This means that the soul of the dead man will henceforth live in the pot hanging above his clan-god.

Another important function of the Anga is to serve as a means of detecting witches, breach of tribal taboo, theft or even to discover loss of property. At the end of 1940 I witnessed an interesting witch-hunt at Palki in the Narayanpur Tahsil.

On 16 November 1940, Aitu, the Muria headman of Palki, bought eight annas worth of Court Fee stamps and affixed them to an application to the Tahsildar of Kondagaon, complaining that in his village the animals were dying, people were falling sick and crops were failing, and asking for the services of the Anga Deo at Bara Dongar to discover what witch, magician or malignant ghost or deity was responsible. On his paying five rupees into the Treasury the Tahsildar issued *parwāna* instructing the priest in charge of the god to take it to Palki (but to no other village) in order to discover and thus cure the trouble.

On the 18th, Aitu reached the shrine at Bara Dongar, and almost immediately the party set out. There was Deo Singh, the hereditary Halba priest of the god, four Muria bearers to carry it and a 'Dhurwa' priest, a Muria specially attached to the god's service. In two days they reached Palki and camped in a little shed of branches outside the village, placing the god on a rough bed of logs and branches in a separate hut.

There Deo Singh told me about this famous Anga. His name was Narsingnath Deo and he was born at Amgaon in the Chota Dongar Pargana. His father was Morg Raj, who now lives at Paralkot, his mother Devni Dokari of Antagarh. His younger brother is the Pat Deo who now lives at Jagdalpur and was taken there in the time of Raja Bhairon Deo to hunt witches. Here, of course, Deo Singh was talking in theological language: actually the Raja, hearing of the fame of the Anga in the wilds, had a copy made and installed in the palace at Jagdalpur. For some time the custom was to bring the original god from Jagdalpur and send the copy to take its place; but in time this custom was dropped and today the Anga in the palace acts independently of its prototype.

Raja Bhairon Deo, continued my informant, at one time had both Anga at Jagdalpur. There was a great epidemic, and none of the gods was able to help, so the Raja ordered them all to be thrown into the Indrawati river. But only Anga Deo and his young brother Pat Deo floated on the surface and drifted to the shore. This made them very famous, but the Raja felt that it was wrong to keep two such gods in Jagdalpur and he sent the Anga Narsingnath to Bara Dongar, where he has since resided.[1]

This Anga is made of bel wood. Every three generations it is remade. It is decorated with a silver snake and a sun and moon in silver. The old worn-out images are thrown into a deep pond at Amgaon.

On the 20th of November the witch hunt at Palki began. It was only with great difficulty that I was able to be present, for the villagers concealed both the time and place of the ceremony, and in fact were sending me off in the

[1] For another account see W. V. Grigson's Introduction to my *Maria Murder and Suicide* (1943), pp. x f. According to Grigson's information the Jagdalpur god was copied from the Narayanpur god.

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opposite direction. Once I had made an offering of silver to the god, however, they became very friendly and I was able to witness all that happened

Carried by four men, and accompanied by the village elders, the Anga Deo was carried from house to house round the village. The god stopped before each house, and the women had to come out with an offering of a leaf-cup of rice and a copper coin, and walk under the god and away the other side. If all was well the Dhurwa placed a ring of aonra leaf on the threshold and a bit of iron slag and hammered it with an axe.

But in two houses the Anga scented trouble; he refused to accept the offerings of the householders, swinging round indignantly, then rushing to and fro, whirling and turning in an alarming manner. He pointed out an old man and woman in one house, and the householder in another as specially affected by the evil. The priests hastily poured liquor in front of the god 'for he becomes thirsty when there is some mischief in his presence'.

At last they took the Anga back to his hut outside the village and everybody sat round to discuss what had happened and to consider what was to be done. On this occasion the mediums proclaimed that it was not a magician or witch, but a number of deities affronted at not receiving sufficient honour—Pendrawandin, Pardeshin, Koriya Pat, Garba Rau and the local ancestors—who were causing the trouble. That day and the next day were spent in sacrifice to the Anga and divinations by the local mediums. On the morning of the third day diagnosis having been fully established, they went to effect a cure.

The bearers carried the Anga to the first house which had been shown as 'infected'. They stood before the door and a Siraha-medium sat down before it. The god 'climbed' on him and he revealed what things were needed to appease the angry gods. He made two little images of black wax to represent the *kus* digging-bar of Koriya Pat and the axe of Pendrawandin. The owner of the house brought out a basket of rice and many little leaf-packets of parched gram, rice, lamp-black, rice-flour, haldi. The medium danced and postured before the god, and the Dhurwa took two chickens for the Rau, a pig for Pendrawandin, and a goat for Koriya Pat and made them eat a little rice. Each householder present put a rice-mark on the goat saying, 'Whatever evil disease, ghost or god is troubling us, take to yourself and carry away'.

After this the bearers were suddenly impelled to take the Anga out into the jungle and we all followed. The Anga wandered about erratically, but at last came to a halt at a point where two paths crossed, before an ant-hill. The medium fell into a trance again and called out instructions in a high clear voice. The Dhurwa cleared the ground and made a criss-cross pattern of black and white. He placed seven little piles of rice in a row. He made the sacrificial animals eat, and then killed them, dropping the blood on every pile of rice. With his knife he made a circle to enclose the god, and nailed a piece of slag into the ground.

Then the old man and woman who had been proclaimed as 'infected' came to the front and, holding bunches of *chir* grass (the grass from which brooms are made) behind them, broke them in their hands, threw them away with a gesture of finality, spat and walked hurriedly home without looking round, and by another way. The Anga also was taken home by another route back to its camp.

I was not able to see the ceremonies for the purification of the other house. The Anga demanded an offering of the fur of a wild squirrel, and this took some time to find. Two days later, however, the rites were performed and the village was cleared of its supernatural dangers.

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The Bara Dongar party, richer by a few copper coins and a little rice, returned home the next day.

Among the Bastar gods, these Anga are the most widely regarded by the aboriginal population. They are homely and familiar, and closely related to the life of every day. They constantly intervene in human affairs. They are keenly sensitive to the presence of evil. Their position as gods of the clans gives them great influence, for it means they have to do with marriage and death, and all offences against clan custom and morality. The cult of the Anga is thus still very much alive and since it has been assimilated to the Hinduism of the Ruling Chief it is likely to endure.

But though the future of the Anga cult is assured, its origin is obscure. It is just possible, however, that this god whose name seems to be connected with the Sanskrit-Hindi word *anga*, meaning 'body',[1] has developed out of the cult of the dead and in particular from the custom of using the corpse carried on its bier as a means of divination.

Russell and Hiralal give an account of this for the Gond of the Central Provinces. I have not myself seen it in Bastar, but I am told that there is an exactly similar practice and Grigson has recorded it for the Hill Maria.[2] At a Gond funeral, says Russell, when the body has been carried on its hurdle to the disposal ground, 'the bearers with the body on their shoulders face round to the west, and about ten yards in front of them are placed three saja leaves in a line with a space of a yard between, the first representing the supreme being, the second disembodied spirits, and the third witchcraft. Sometimes a little rice is put on the leaves. An axe is struck three times on the ground, and a villager now cries to the corpse to disclose the cause of his death, and immediately the bearers, impelled, as they believe, by the dead man, carry the body to one of the leaves. If they halt before the first, then the death was in the course of nature; if before the second, it arose from the anger of offended spirits; if before the third witchcraft was the cause. The ordeal may be thrice repeated, the arrangement of the leaves being changed each time. If witchcraft is indicated as the cause of death, and confirmed by the repeated tests, the corpse is asked to point out the sorcerer or witch, and the body is carried along until it halts before someone in the crowd, who is at once seized and disposed of as a witch. Sometimes the corpse may be carried to the house of a witch in another village to a distance of eight or ten miles. In Mandla in such cases a Gunia or exorciser formerly called on the corpse to go forward and point out the witch. The bearers then, impelled by the corpse, made one step forward and stopped. The exorciser then again adjured the corpse, and they made a step, and this was repeated again and again until they halted in front of the supposed witch. All the beholders and the bearers themselves thus thought that they were impelled by the corpse, and the episode is a good illustration of the power of suggestion.'[3]

[1] In *The Ocean of Story*, there are puns on the Land of Anga and the body. Yasahketu 'came to earth to conceal his body', a shameless pun, says Penzer, which could also mean 'to protect the realm of Anga'.—N. M. Penzer, *The Ocean of Story* (London, 1924–8), Vol. III, p. 13. And further, 'it is related in the *Ramayana* that Madana, the god of love, incurred the displeasure of Mahadeo. He fled from the hermitage of the latter to escape his consuming anger, and the region where "he cast off his body (Anga) ", or rather where it was reduced to ashes, has since been known by the name of Anga, and the God of Love has since been called by the name of "Ananga" (without body)'. —Nundolal Dey, 'Notes on Ancient Anga or the District of Bhagalpur', *JASB*, Vol. X, p. 327.

[2] Grigson, op. cit., p. 272.

[3] Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 90.



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The similarity between this description and the account which I have just given of the witch hunt at Palki is very striking. The dead are generally believed to communicate their desires to mankind and to give them instruction about the ordering of their lives. The dead are, of course, specially connected with the clan and its continuity. It is not altogether impossible that out of a cult of the Departed, where in former days the bier was used more than at present for divination and to express the will of the gods, there gradually developed the custom of substituting some symbol for the corpse and at last the 'Anga' for the bier.

This suggestion gets some support from a dream seen by a Bison-horn Maria convict shortly before the fatal quarrel which led to murder and his imprisonment. He dreamt of an Anga, a drum and a village-trumpet. The Anga, he said, stood for the corpse of the murdered man being taken out for burial and the drum and trumpet suggested the funeral. The Anga, he admitted, clearly foreshadowed his terrible deed had he only had the wit to understand it.[1]

It is just possible, of course, that the clan-god takes its name from the land of Anga, a great kingdom—one of the chief sixteen—of ancient India, which has been identified with the present district of Bhagalpur and part of the Santal Parganas. Its boundaries are uncertain and may have also included the districts of Birbhum, Murshidabad and Manbhum.[2] At the time of the *Atharva Veda*, the inhabitants were known as Anga and 'the contemptuous way they were mentioned suggests these were aboriginals'.[3] A connexion between the Muria and Bihar is not impossible and is suggested by many cultural similarities, but I have not found anything resembling the Bastar clan-god in the ethnographic records of Bihar.

## V. Muria Temples

*Mân ta pen nahi ta pâthar.—If you believe, it is a god; if not, it is a stone.*—Muria saying.

J. D. Unwin defined a temple as a 'roofed building other than a grave-house, in which the power in the universe manifests itself and which is specially erected and maintained in order that a right relation may be preserved with that power, the building being such that a man can stand upright inside it'.[4] On this definition the Muria build temples and are in Unwin's 'deistic stage' of culture—a stage which, according to Unwin, is only achieved by those peoples which forbid pre-nuptial intercourse. The Muria provide a striking exception to Unwin's general theory and throw some light upon it.

In a few Muria villages there are no temples. In Almer there is nothing but a few stone seats under saja trees, where the Village Mother is worshipped and the New Eating ceremonies performed. In Kajen the Village Mother forbade the erection of any shrines. But in most villages there are several buildings that fulfil the above definition of a temple. Sometimes these are scattered about the village, one put in the jungle, another in someone's field, a third actually in the compound of a house. In other villages, as for example in Bayanar and Adner, the shrines are all together in one spot where the divine power manifests itself. In Kabonga, the shrines looked like a little village.

1 See *Maria Murder and Suicide*, p. 213.
2 Dey, op. cit., p. 318. 3 Ibid., p. 344.
4 J. D. Unwin, *Sex and Culture* (London, 1934), p. 14.

the eggs go bad, the priest plucks the feathers of the hen and puts them with the eggs. Broken egg-shells (which are usually preserved on bits of stick and kept under the roof) are added and all are taken to a cross-road. The priest cries, '*Tha tha*, you wanted to injure my hen. Take this and go away'. After this, the hen grows new feathers and the next lot of eggs will be good.

In the north-west of the State, the son of the village Gaita has a position of privilege in the ghotul and is often appointed its leader, but in the rest of the State the boys of the priestly families have no special privileges and can claim no special office; they are treated exactly the same as any other boys. But the Gaita's and Siraha's sons begin their training as priests or mediums while they are still boys, and many chelik have the power of falling into trance and prophesying. In Masora I saw chelik being taught how to bathe the gods and carry them about. In Koilibera I watched the Gaita teaching two of the chelik how to sacrifice chickens and offer egg-shells to the gods at the end of the Pus Kolang expedition. Parents often take their sons to special festivals so that they can learn what to do by imitation. The chelik usually attend ceremonies as acolytes and prepare the sacrificial food, wash the vessels, and make ready the sacrificial hearth. In this way the future Gaita or Pujari learns his business. The function of Siraha or Gunia is not always hereditary, but boys are chosen and trained when it is found that they are of an unusually sensitive temperament.

## VII. White and Black Magic

Hitherto we have been dealing with Muria religion mainly in its relation to the gods; we must now take a brief glance at its prophylactic and protective measures on behalf of man against his natural and ghostly enemies. Chelik and motiari are protected against black magic by the divine power of the ghotul fence, but they are only safe while they are inside the ghotul. Evil powers cannot enter the building, but they camp all round, and the Muria boy and girl grow up in an atmosphere of battle in the unseen world.

Black magic entered the world through an insufficiency. Bhagavan had seven daughters. He had prepared flour with which to create man, but his daughters stole and ate a little from some of the heaps of flour. In these there was thus not enough material for them to become real human beings and they became magicians and witches. Because of their lack of flesh and blood, they try to steal flesh and drink the blood of men. The warlock and witch are thus sub-human, not fully created. In the untouched Muria tradition, the enemy of mankind is usually a man; belief in female witches and the evil eye of woman is generally a later and Hindu accretion to the old beliefs.

The story comes from Karikhodra. In it we see that the warlock and witch are sub-human, not fully created. In other stories witchcraft originates in disobedience and cannibalism. In Matawal in the Mardapal Pargana we were told the following tale:

> A Muria and his sister left their parents' house and went out to seek for work. After a time they returned home and wished to make an offering to Mother Earth. They went to the shrine of the goddess and the boy said to his sister, 'Whatever you do, do not eat any of the flesh sacrificed here'. They found that the Gaita had put some flesh on a saja leaf in the name of the goddess before her shrine. As they approached a crow flew down, ate some of the flesh and scattered the rest. The boy picked it up and put it back again on the leaf. Behind the shrine a lot of blood from the animals offered and sacrificed had

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collected in a pool. The girl was afraid to eat the flesh in the presence of her brother but went there secretly and drank the blood.

When Mother Earth saw all the offerings that had been made, she was very pleased with that Muria boy and said, 'O boy, whatever you want ask it of me and I will give it to you'. The boy replied, 'I want nothing'. Then the goddess said, 'From today I make you the priest of my shrine. But your sister will be a witch; look at her mouth'. The boy looked and it was red with the blood that she had drunk. From that day, owing to the disobedience of women, there have been witches in the world.

Another story comes from Kanhargaon:

Lingo married Kodurjunge and lived with her happily, working in his fields. But Tallur Muttai was jealous, for she desired to marry Lingo herself and thought how she could accomplish her desire. One day she took Kodurjunge into the jungle and made her eat a basketful of jamun berries. Then she left her there and went to Lingo saying, 'Your wife is a witch, come and look at her mouth, she is coming home with her mouth reddened with the blood of men. When I saw her I ran away terrified to tell you'. Presently Kodurjunge came home and when Lingo saw her mouth reddened with the jamun juice, he thought, 'Yes, indeed, she must be a witch', and killed her.

Then Tallur Muttai said, 'You cannot live without a wife, marry me'. But Lingo sat with hanging head and would not look at her face. So Tallur Muttai filled with anger went out and cut up Kodurjunge's body. She took it round the village saying that it was pig's flesh. All the pregnant women there at once roasted a little of the flesh and ate it. The others put it in their houses for the morrow's meal. When Lingo discovered what had happened, he went round the village and told them to throw the flesh away. Those who threw it away suffered no harm, but all who had eaten became witches.

The methods of the Muria warlock are not unlike those practised elsewhere in India and indeed throughout the world. The warlock makes a grass doll to represent his enemy and buries it with the head of a chick.[1] This will soon cause his enemy's burial. To injure cattle, he gets the bone of a cow and buries it with a consecrated egg on the threshold of a cow-shed. A more elaborate method is to put the bone, with a hair from the tail, and a little cow's blood, into a small earthen pot and bury it in the path by which the cattle will go to their grazing-ground. The magician ruins a crop in the same way, burying a little rice with appropriate charms in the threshing-floor. The rice in a pot can be diminished by placing an ear of rice beneath it.

To burn with fire, a warlock picks up a hot coal and a pebble and blows them with a charm towards his enemy, or he burns a grass doll. The antidote to this is to wave hot cow-dung ash three times in the air and hide it under a tree; as the ash cools, so will the victim.

To stop a girl having a child, an enemy—it is usually a woman in this case—steals a little of the haldi from her body as she kisses her on her wedding day. She scratches up some of the mud which the bridegroom throws on the girl at the end of a marriage ceremony and somehow obtains a scrap of her menstrual cloth. She buries these by a river and her victim will be sterile.

[1] This is the *desultoria* of the ancient world, the image-magic common in all ages and all places.

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154 The fear of magic is a prominent cause of the few murders committed by Muria in the last ten years. Manga of Kodoli believed that his uncle had 674 caused the death of two of his sons by magic as a sacrifice to the Yer Kanyang of his tank. One day the supposed sorcerer said to him, 'I ate up your sons and now I will devour you', whereon Manga killed him. At the Diwali festival in 1938, Boga killed the Pujari of Katagaon because he was a sorcerer and did not do his worship properly with the result that the crops failed.

In Padnar (Mardapal Pargana)—a village where there is no regular ghotul—a man called Kana suspected a whole family of practising black magic. His accusations were so serious that several of them went to live elsewhere. But one by one they returned, and by Dassera of 1939 they were all back in Padnar. One day during the festival Kana, thoroughly drunk on rice-beer, took the opportunity of telling them they were wizards, accused them of relieving themselves on the village gods, and threatened to turn them out of the village. This drove four men of the suspect family to desperation and they assaulted and killed their enemy.

154 The methods of black magic and the attempts to counter it may be studied in the interesting case of the long struggle for magic supremacy between Gurgu, the Gaita of Almer, and his enemy Singlu. The quarrel started when Singlu, who belonged to the Karanga clan, said to Gurgu, who is a Kaudo, 'I have lived many years in this village. Let me erect *kutukul* here and then my ancestors will live here and help me'. But the Gaita pointed out that the clan-territory (*bhum*) of the Karanga was at Kokori and Singlu should have his menhirs erected there. 'If you bring your gods and ancestors here, our gods will be neglected.' And he refused to give him land.

Singlu began his campaign by making a *kapāṭ*, a magic door, which was represented by cutting wood into three pieces and burying them. The intention of this was that Gurgu's door (symbolizing his house) would be broken and his family ruined. But Gurgu did counter-magic and survived.

Then Singlu cast a spell over Gurgu's speech. Previously Gurgu had prided himself on being able to talk fluently in Halbi with visiting officials, but now he found that he could only talk in Gondi, and there was a general belief that as a result he would be deprived of his position as village headman. But Gurgu 'cured' this also and when I saw him was speaking excellent Halbi-Chattisgarhi.

[187] Singlu's next move was to send a white owl every night to the village. This bird, which is a sort of Ondar Muttai,[1] is very ill-omened. When it cries someone is sure to die. The villagers began to fall ill, but Gurgu managed to 'cure' this also. I was not able to get many details about these 'cures'; I gathered that Gurgu did not perform any symbolic acts of sympathetic magic, but rather by making generous sacrifices obtained the assistance of the local gods. The sacrifices, however, included a doll of dub grass which may have been a means of devoting Singlu to the deity. Gurgu also put nails of iron slag round the village boundary to 'close' it against magic, but as Singlu was already inside this precaution was not of much value.

When I visited Almer, Singlu had recently caused great consternation by taking a hare to the village boundary and sacrificing it to some unknown deity. Now only the Kaser-Gaita may offer such sacrifices and this breach of religious etiquette was believed to have offended the gods greatly, for they drove away all wild animals from before the village hunters. This was the time of the Marka Wijja Pandum, before which the chelik go out on a ceremonial hunt, on the result of which depends the success or failure of the crops. But

[1] See pp. 169f.

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754 Singlu brought disaster this year on the hunt. For a whole month the chelik were taken by Gurgu to the forest, but they got nothing. One day they did shoot a young sambhar but it ran away to another village with their arrows sticking into it, and another village got the meat and the omen. All round other villages were returning triumphant from their hunts, but on 22 April 1941 when I was there the Almer boys returned yet once again empty-handed and Gurgu exclaimed with tears in his eyes, 'I am defeated'.[1]

Here the magician was acting, as it were, at a distance. There is also among the Muria a tradition of the Parat Bagh or were-tiger where a man is metamorphosed into a tiger and attacks his enemy directly. He kills but does not eat him. To become a tiger, a man must go to an ant-hill and circle round it seven times clockwise repeating the necessary charm. It is the charm that matters, and somewhat naturally I have been unable to get hold of it. The man then becomes a tiger, and goes to kill his enemy. When he returns he goes round the ant-hill again, this time anti-clockwise, and is restored to his own shape.

While magicians are very dangerous, but seem to live quite respectably at home, the witch is surrounded in the popular mind with every circumstance of horror and disgust. She goes out naked as a cow; before her go the *mohini*—soothing charms of love—to lull her victims asleep; her spittle is like fire falling to the ground; she drinks the blood of her victims, vomits it and cooks and eats her vomit; she feeds on excrement.

### VIII. The Ecstatic Trance

754 How are these evils countered? We have to remember that not all human
791 ills are regarded as of supernatural origin; there are many which are 'natural' and are met by natural remedies. But many other types of disaster are not explicable on natural grounds, and to deal with these the Siraha-medium or
787 the Gunia-diviner is consulted for a proper diagnosis. This diagnosis is generally obtained in trance. The Siraha sits by his patient, some burning coals before him, coughs and belches, and shakes his head till his whole body is in motion with rapid rhythmic movements. These gradually increase in violence, the hair streams out and is thrown to and fro, saliva trickles from the mouth and the tongue protrudes. After a time, the medium gives a loud cry and falls forward, placing the palms of his hands on the burning coals. The smoke curls up between his fingers. He then sits back on his heels, and his companion asks him questions; it is believed that now the god speaks through his lips and the questioner will hear the truth of his perplexities.

791 These mediums also prophesy in a general way at festivals, when they play and posture with a complete forgetfulness of the outside world. Some of them
781 scourge themselves violently with iron chains, others catch hold of the symbol of a god and rush violently about with it, others roll in the dust, hurl themselves on the ground, sit on the spiked seat of a swing, turn somersaults, or simply jog up and down on their toes for lengthy periods.

[1] There was a similar war between a sorcerer and a whole village which he reduced to terror at Sulanga in 1938. Sonu Muria, an ex-convict and a quarrelsome, angry man, was the Pujari of Bhatti Pen. To quarrel with Sonu meant, almost as a matter of routine, that someone would die in your house. From this cause Jagru, a Halba, lost two of his sons on one day and left the village. Another Halba, Jubi, lost three members of his family in a year. Sonu had a row with a settlement of Gonds: several died: and they all migrated. The Muria and Halba of Sulanga took the matter to the police and urged that the Agent should be sent from Jagdalpur for their protection.

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your mat to sleep on'. So I had to get up and give him the mat on which we were sleeping together. I was very sorry, but when I came back, she took off her sari and spread it for me to lie on, and I covered her with my blanket.

In Markabera the head of the chelik said, 'If my ghotul-wife is away, I dream of sleeping with her. I chase her and often have her'. He sometimes experienced orgasm during such dreams. 'I once dreamt that I was going to dance in another village. I walked along the road with a girl I had always wanted. That night I was able to sleep with her in the other village.'

A chelik at Chandabera said, 'We generally dream of our earliest loves in the ghotul, for these are girls whom we never forget. We dream that they are sleeping by our side or running away from us. Sometimes we dream that we have gone out fishing with them or that we are on our way to a marriage dance'.

The seriousness with which the Muria treat their dreams and the reality they ascribe to them is clearly shown in the precautions taken the following day. I have already referred to various cures for nightmare. I will add a few more. At Bhopna a Muria said, 'If I dream that I have gone down under the water, I consult the Siraha and he says that it means that an evil ghost is coming. This once happened to me, so I got seven different kinds of wood and made a bonfire of them by the bank of a stream. I put some gur and ghee on the fire. Then I and my wife went round it three times, entered the water and ducked below it. We took off our old clothes and left them there on the bank, dressed in new clothes and went home without looking round.' This was rather a drastic and expensive cure. An easier means of averting the possible danger of a dream is this from Chingnar:

> A dream of a fight between two people suggests danger from black magic. To avert this the figure of a man with a bow and arrow should be made with gruel and a bad egg, a pig or a chicken should be offered to it. The little image should be thrown away outside the village and the danger will disappear.

Gadru of Chaniyagaon once dreamt,

> A beautiful woman came to my children and said to them, 'I am going to devour you, because your parents give me nothing to eat'. The next day my children fell ill, and the Siraha declared that their sickness was due to Lagar Deo, who was angry because the customary offering to him three years after the first child had not been made, and he therefore wanted to kill all my children. So I dedicated two pigs to Lagar Deo to be allowed to wander freely and killed three years later. Once I had done this my children recovered.

At Palnar, the Suel once dreamt that he was climbing up a huge stone. Suddenly he saw a chaprasi, he was frightened and tried to run away. He fell down and broke his teeth. When he awoke he found he had fever and only recovered after he had sacrificed a pig and made other offerings.

In Chandabera, a Muria jealous of the happiness of the chelik performed hostile magic against the ghotul. The Sirdar dreamt that one of the boys had died and his corpse was being carried away for burial. Soon afterwards he himself got an attack of fever. He was sleeping at home and dreamt that a chelik came to him saying, 'Come, let us go to dance at a wedding'. The Sirdar replied, 'I am suffering from fever and cannot go'. The chelik said, 'The fever has been sent you by such and such a person, you must drive it

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32.
Muria



back again'. Then the boy awoke and the following day sent for the Siraha, who agreed that his illness was due to magic. They then took a pig and chicken outside the village and sacrificed them saying, 'Are you going away or not?' Both pig and chicken ate the rice offered them, and this was taken to mean that the danger from the magic was averted. The boys feasted on the pig and chicken and the Sirdar recovered from his fever. It was generally believed that the chelik who visited him in his dream was Lingo Pen himself.

Naitami Dole, a Muria of Kokori, described an experience when he was the Sirdar of his ghotul.

> One night I dreamt that I was having intercourse with a motiari. The next morning I found myself suffering from fever, so I called the Siraha to ask what was the matter. He told me that an enemy had sent the motiari to me by his magic. So I went down to the bank of the river and made seven circles on the bank putting rice, powdered egg-shells and ashes in them with an egg in the middle circle for the Yer Kanyang. Then I recovered.

To see one's house burning in a dream means that black magic, particularly in its very dangerous form of the *agindan*, or arrow of fire, is going to be sent against one. To avert it a chicken should be sacrificed and a small image made of *dab* grass carried out across the village boundary and thrown away.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria



114 674 according to Mr Elwin's categories. Apart from the five intoxication murders, two were prompted by belief that crops had been bewitched, one was a fatigue crime and one was caused by a dispute as to property, one by resentment over being dunned for a debt of one anna and one by a quarrel over failure to repair the skins of a drum broken by a friend who had borrowed it, while three were the result of conjugal infidelity. There were three cases in which the villagers agreed to conceal the crime to avoid the trouble of police and court investigation. The means employed included assault with an axe, a sword, a fencing pole, a stick, a wooden stool and fists, kicking, throttling, shooting with bow and arrow, twisting of neck and stabbing with a knife. In one case the accused committed suicide to avoid the disgrace attendant on the revival of an old scandal caused by his son's association with a blacksmith girl whose murder he and the villagers had hushed up for three years.

114 776 754 Of witchcraft and magic as factors in crime Mr Elwin has written fully in Chapter V, and has illustrated at page 61 a typical clan-god, Anga Pen or Pat Deo (log-god), sometimes used to detect witches in the manner described at page 17, while at pages 185-6 he deals with the Maria view that a witch or a sorcerer should be killed. That view is undoubtedly widely held outside tribal circles, and the power of tribal log-gods to detect black magic is equally strongly believed in by Hindu and Muslim subjects of the State. The reaction of tribal beliefs and practices on the local Hindu rites and ceremonies is very marked, and an example of this is the way in which Raja Bhairon Deo, the great-grandfather of the present Maharaja of Bastar, installed in Jagdalpur a log-god which was either a copy of a famous log-god from Narayanpur in the north-west of the State, or, according to its present Halba Pujari, was brought by a former ruler from Dongar, the old capital, to Narayanpur, and shifted thence by Raja Bhairon Deo. This god is now the Pat Deo of Bastar *par excellence*, and four ceremonies are held in his honour during the Maharaja's Dassara celebrations. His witch-finding function strongly survives, and I well remember my amused astonishment when in 1927 during an inspection of the accounts of the Jagdalpur Temples managed by the State Court of Wards I found

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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that the villagers around Jagdalpur frequently requisitioned his services for this purpose, paying for them a fee of Rs 5 into the State Treasury. When I wondered whether by lending the log-god the Court of Wards had not been accessory to the killing or beating of witches, the Pujari thus explained the god's conformity to modern law: 'Pat Deo is worshipped to save men from *bhut* and *pret*, and detects *bhut*, *churel* and witches. If a village needs his detective services, the villagers pay into the Treasury a fee of Rs 5, and then the Manager lets me take the god out. I walk behind Pat Deo, who is carried on the shoulders of four men, none of whom must come from the village which needs his help. Starting from the east side, we take him round the village widdershins, and then enter the village, Pat Deo himself impelling the bearers and then knocking against the house where the evil is hidden or against the actual magician. He will not leave the house till the guilty one comes out. Then in these days the offender kneels before Pat Deo and cries for forgiveness, which is given before Pat Deo goes home; he is not even outcasted now. In my grandfather's time he would have been set on an ass with his face towards the tail and taken in procession round the village; his head would then have been shaved, his front teeth pulled out by a Ghasia, and his hair and teeth buried in an ant-hill, while he would have been excommunicated and driven out of his village. They pulled out his teeth to stop him using them to suck blood and because without them he could not pronounce his spells.' One may be pardoned for scepticism as to the affair even in modern days being closed with Pat Deo kindly forgiving the magician!

This fear of magic as the source of illness and all troubles is strong in many parts of India. Here in Hyderabad belief in the power of *bhanamatti* or black magic is widespread, even among some persons of the highest education and social standing. A detailed investigation was made in 1916 by Mr L. B. Goad, an experienced officer of the Indian Police, then in charge of the State Criminal Investigation Department. His conclusion was that *bhanamatti* was so absolute a scourge in parts of Hyderabad and so utilized as a form of blackmail by its practitioners that special measures were

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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needed to root them out. The evils which he found to have been inflicted on the victims in a series of cases investigated included loss of consciousness, barking and howling like jackals, appearance of black marks on various parts of the body, giddiness with great abdominal pain, setting of the jaws whilst the victim beat the air and ground with hands and feet, immodest and uncontrollable dancing like a prostitute, ape-like antics, violent laughing and hysteria, clothes dropping off the body, vomiting and spitting out of stones, gravel, marking-nuts, needles, thorns and lemons, food turning into excreta, loss of speech, cessation of menstrual periods or their continuance for weeks and months on end, and many others. His report concluded: 'I trust that this report of mine may have the desired effect of proving that the existing state of affairs in those tracts in which *bhanamatti* is prevalent requires special measures to deal with the present evil. If this is not done the populace will take the law into their own hands, as they have done in more than one instance in the recent past, and as they threatened to do when the District Magistrate of Bidar took action in Bidar City with a commendably strong and firm hand last autumn. Having personally witnessed the dreadful trials which women and girls have to suffer under the scourge of *bhanamatti*, I should not hesitate, did the power lie in my hands, to extend the operations of the Criminal Tribes Act to every cowardly blackguard who was known to practise the vile cult of *bhanamatti*.' Even now the Hyderabad District Police retain the services of an official versed in the art of treating the victims of *bhanamatti*. Most of its practitioners are persons of the untouchable castes, but the victims in the 1916 Bidar 'epidemic' of *bhanamatti* included persons of all ranks and professions, even lawyers. Murders of suspected practitioners[1] continue in Hyderabad. Is it to be wondered at that this fear of magic is so common a cause of murder amongst the Maria? It is after all not so long since in Great Britain an Act of Parliament passed in 1736 finally stopped prosecutions for alleged witchcraft.[2] Mr Elwin has pointed out on page 80

[1] Two were reported in the *Times of India* of 5 May 1933.

[2] A useful brief summary of British witchcraft history and folklore is given in Chapter X of *English Folklore* by Christina Hole (London, 1949).

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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and measures straight upwards from the corpse's chest to the roof, poking the stick through the thatch. Then he climbs up to the roof and makes a hole which is intended symbolically to allow the message of death to spread out through the world. He puts his dhol drum above the hole, waves a stick thrice round his head and then beats his drum with the rhythm *dung dung-dung*. He beats with one hand, though the normal method is to beat with two. After the drumming has continued for a while, he comes down from the roof and continues it on the ground.

The Hanagunda's wife now husks some rice, makes it into four packets with leaves and ties two of these under the arms of the corpse and two at its waist. She applies to the chest black dust from the bottom of one of the cooking utensils so that they may be able to recognize him when he is reborn. The grand-daughter of the dead man, if available, or some girl in the same relationship, passes a string seven times round his three middle fingers and middle toes, again with the intention of ensuring his return.

It will be most convenient if I describe the actual course of a ceremony which occurred at Penta on 10 February 1942. This funeral is of special interest as the mourners had reason to believe that the dead man was the victim of black magic.

Sori Kosa of Penta had a love affair with the daughter-in-law of Markami Bando which resulted in a serious quarrel between the two families. Kosa's father paid the necessary fine and a special ceremony of peace and friendship was performed. But Bando was not really reconciled—and soon trouble began for Kosa's family. His son by his first wife died; shortly afterwards another of his sons died. One day Bando spat on Kosa's father in the bazaar. A week later the old man fell ill and died. Kosa's wife and daughter were also taken ill but recovered. The villagers whispered that this was due to Bando's magic, and described how he had made a small doll of earth, wrapped it up in a leaf-cup and carried it away into the jungle. But there was no case for police interference, and the villagers proceeded with the funeral for Kosa's father.

After the preliminary rites that I have already described, all Kosa's father's relatives assembled. The women brought

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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764 then thrown aside. It is very important that this grass should not be burnt. The aim of the rite was to ensure that the [184] man would be able to breathe on his journey to the next world, though other informants said that it was to allow the soul to escape. The brother-in-law of the dead man then lit a bundle of grass with fire brought from the house and after taking a turn round the pyre set fire to the pile of wood by the head. Another man went round in the opposite direction and fired the wood by the legs.

After the pyre was well alight, the whole company went to a stream and washed themselves. The grand-daughter soaked part of her sari in water and holding the wet portion in her hand came home and rinsed it out on the very place where the coffin had lain inside the house so that the dead man could drink it.

Early next morning, the dead man's son-in-law went to the cremation-ground to examine the ashes and there found an [754] earthen doll tied in a leaf-cup. This led the Waddai to declare that the death was due to black magic done by Bando and concealed by him in the jungle.

Later in the morning a cow was brought and its legs washed by the deceased's daughter-in-law. After touching its forehead with a little rice she said to it, 'We have given you your share, now don't make us suffer any longer'. One of the drum-beaters touched the cow with his stick and a marriage-relative killed it by a heavy blow with the blunt end of his axe. He then cut the tail, removed the liver and made it into twenty-four pieces in equal shares of six pieces each. Each share was wrapped up in a leaf and roasted. The party took these to the cremation-ground. On reaching the place some of the women picked out the bones from the pyre and kissed them. The dead man's son collected any half-burnt pieces of wood and kicked them towards the centre of the pyre. Then they cleared the ash where the corpse's head had been, cow-dunged the place and put the leaf-cups there.

The packets containing the liver were now opened and three pieces from each packet were placed on the ground and three in each of the leaf-cups. The twelve pieces on the ground were for the Earth and the twelve pieces in the leaf-cups for the Dead. The Waddai made seven piles of rice. He held a

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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*CHAPTER FIVE*

# THE CAUSES OF CRIME: WITCHCRAFT AND MAGIC

## I

## THE ORIGIN OF MAGIC

754 773 The origin of black magic has been described by the Maria in a number of villages and the reports generally agree. 'The first man in the world to practise magic was Nandraj Guru. All the gods[1] and the Dead went to him to learn the art. At one time seven gods were being taught by him daily. One day a Maria of the Maja clan was digging roots in the jungle when he heard voices and went stealthily to see what was happening. From behind a tree he saw Nandraj Guru teaching the seven gods. Every day the Maria went to the place and overheard everything that was said. On the last day the pupils brought offerings of pigs and chickens for their Guru. He sacrificed them and divided the meat into seven equal shares. But to his surprise after a few moments he noticed that the number of shares had grown to eight. He called his disciples and said, "Search the jungle around, for there must surely be a ghost or an animal hiding near". The search revealed the presence of the Maria on the branch of a tree and he was brought before the Guru.

'Nandraj said, "Listen, everyone here is a god and you are the only human being who has learned our magic. Unless you give an offering as the gods have done, your son will die". "What offering should I give?" asked the Maria. "In your house" said the Guru, "there is a pigeon. Offer that to me". Now by the word "pigeon" the Guru meant the Maria's only son and the reason why he demanded him was that his knowledge could only be imparted to immortal beings who would use it in the proper way. But the Guru feared that now that a human being had discovered the secret, he would make use of the magic at all times. There would be no deaths. Pain would be banished, and the gods would have

[1] God, spelt without a capital, represents the Hindi *deo*. The Gondi *pen* is translated 'clan-god'. A *deo* is little more than what the Middle Ages called a 'demon'.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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no Dead to people their kingdom. But if this human being were to eat a bit of the liver of his own son, then there would be deaths in the world and the Maria himself would have learned the knowledge of evil and death and would become a magician. 754 779

'The Maria, little knowing that when Nandraj Guru said "pigeon", he meant his son, asked one of the gods to go to his

[773]

A typical Anga Pen, a clan-god. Carried by four men, it is sometimes used to detect witches.

house and fetch the bird. The god killed the boy, removed the liver, and the Maria and the seven gods ate it together. As the Maria unwittingly ate the liver of his own son, he was filled with the knowledge of death and evil, and became the first sorcerer. Before he died, he taught his own disciples the art and today many men know how to harm and kill their enemies. But in every case the liver must be obtained, for [826] the liver is the jiuo (soul) of all beings.'

In Khutepal the Maria said that they began learning magic in the month of June. The young disciples must go to the jungle and set up a small stone which represents an uraskal menhir. To the left of the pillar they place another stone flat on the ground to represent a danyakal. Then between the uraskal and the danyakal a number of small stones are placed in line from right to left. This line of stones represents one kind of magic, say the magic for curing the sick. Parallel to this they place a second line of small stones. This represents another kind of magic, say doing injury to an enemy. 754

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria



754A third line is put for making women barren, a fourth line for destroying crops and cattle, and so on.

Then the Guru begins to teach the young men in the name of Nandraj, Bodhraj, Kirkod, Markod, Indor and Bandor. He holds a bamboo stick in his hand and as he recites his mantra he beats the stones in turn, beginning with the uraskal and striking each stone from left to right. He must not, however, touch the danyakal with his stick. The disciples chant the mantra after him, and then one by one they stand up and strike the stones with the stick. By December the whole art of black magic is acquired.

At the beginning of the course of study, the disciples subscribe to buy a pig and chicken for their Guru. At the end they also bring offerings and a pot of rice-beer. On the last day a little rice is placed on the danyakal stone and the chicken brought by the disciples is made to eat it. Then it is killed and the boys feast with their Guru.

674 754 One homicide not in our list, which occurred at Dhurli, was connected with such a school of magic. A youth named Telami Dhurwa used to go daily to Dogi Para to learn magic from an older man of the same name. The rule here was that from time to time the students should subscribe for a pig and that each should take their instructor a pot of rice-beer. One day Dhurwa and his fellow-students took the required pig and rice-beer, and after their class was finished they feasted with their Guru. On their way home the boys began to quarrel, and Dhurwa and another boy killed a third boy named Hunga. The people at Dhurli said that Hunga's soul [775] was not mingled with the dead because he was learning black magic, and a memorial stone was not erected for the same reason. Hunga in fact became a very dangerous ghost, a Rau [682] Bhut. The two boys were sentenced to short terms of imprisonment as no intention to murder was proved. When [783] Dhurwa was released he had to offer, in addition to the usual ceremonies, a special and expensive sacrifice to his clan-god.

## II

## THE SORCERER'S METHODS

754 The Maria sorcerer goes about his business in much the same way as elsewhere in India or the world. He may attack

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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his enemy directly by blowing something at him, by putting a charm into his food, by performing certain rites or by the evil eye. He may turn into an animal and attack his foe in wild and bestial guise. He may obtain the services of a ghost or a godling to do his work for him.

Stories illustrating all these different methods are common in the Maria villages. At Khutepal I was told 'how a man there could transform himself into a tiger. He would then lie hid in the jungle and when any human being or cow came by, he used to kill and devour him. He then took his human form again and came home and lay with his wife'. After he had killed five or six people in this way, the villagers finally summoned up courage to track down the 'tiger' and kill it. A watch was kept and one day to their surprise and horror they saw the man actually changing into a tiger and then back to human form. They rushed at him and killed him instantly. Similar stories were told me in Dhurli, but here they said that it was most common for such things to happen in the great Zamindari of Jeypore. It is generally believed that if a were-tiger is injured, similar marks will appear on the human body of the man who has possessed it.

Sometimes instead of turning into an animal the sorcerer sends an animal to do his business for him. There are many stories of how people have been attacked by bears and tigers on this account. Indeed many Maria believe that no animal or snake will ever attack a human being unless it is incited to do so by magic. Once on the way from Pordem to Rewali I saw the funeral pyre of a snake. A little while previously a very long snake marked with alternate black and yellow bands had been sent to Rewali by a magician to kill one of his enemies, Nupo Bira. Bira, however, was able to kill the snake in time, and its body was then carried out of the village and cremated beyond the boundary-line. Four pegs of tendu wood were driven into the ground at the four corners of the pyre, and the people claimed that the ritual cremation together with the pegs would effectively protect Bira from any further attack.[1]

[1] An extraordinary case occurred at Bhandara in 1929. A Kunbin (Hindu) woman was bitten by a snake and to avoid further trouble installed the image of Nagoba (the cobra god) in her house. This deity used to possess her and she gained a wide reputation as a healer. One day a fisherwoman, haunted by evil spirits, came for treatment.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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754 Witches seem to prefer the direct attack. At Mokhpal I was given a vivid description of how a witch performed her hideous rites. 'She goes out of her house at night and finds an ant-hill. She takes off all her clothes and removes even the waist-band. Seven times she goes round the hill. She appears more like a ghost than a human being. Anyone who looks at her goes blind at the sight. She goes to her victim's house, places a bit of grass on his breast and sucks his blood through it. She takes it back to the ant-hill and mixes the blood with milk. Then she can tell by looking at it whether that man will be lucky or unlucky. If the milk is red, he will die, but if it is white wealth will come to his house. If a man dies the witch goes to the grave, revives him and cuts off his head'.

At Tikanpal I was given another account. 'A witch sees a youth and desires him, but she is not content to lie with him as a lover. She must devour his whole body. She goes to him at night and turns his liver over inside his body. After he has been buried, she takes the body out of the grave. She eats the flesh and drinks the blood and puts the bones back into the grave. Sometimes when she robs a man of his blood, she puts it in a bit of broken pot and cooks it on a fire which must be made of a single piece of wood'.

Thirdly, and most sinister, a sorcerer is able to employ the services of a ghost or an evil spirit. Here the danger to the intended victim is, of course, twofold, for there is not only the malice of the magician but also the power of a supernatural [775] being who has become his ally. It is notable that the ghosts of executed murderers are specially liable to be so used by the magicians.

Witches also have the power of affecting the domestic life of their victims. At Samgiri the Maria described how the witch could destroy a man's seed and, even though he were not impotent, he would never be able to have a child. This happened at Kuchepal where a man was in love with a widow who was a witch. After a time he left her, and in revenge she destroyed his seed. When after a long time he found

The Kunbin stripped herself and her patient and then overwhelmed with frenzy thrust a burning log into her unfortunate victim's belly and killed her. She removed all the internal organs of the thorax and abdomen and offered them to Nagoba, claiming that in this way the hostile spirits had been destroyed.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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754 that his wife did not bear him a child, he went to the Waddai who discovered the real reason, performed the proper rites and soon a large family came into being.

754 Witches can injure women by prolonging their menstrual 755 periods. The Siraha can counter this by offering sacrifices 841 to the Dead and to the Mirchuk. In Kameli a woman who was suffering from mennhorragia was cured by this means. [762] But sometimes the Siraha can do nothing, and in despair the unhappy woman may hang herself.

754 At Borgum I was told that only widows can perform black magic and that they usually call on the ghosts of the dead to help them in their wicked deeds. Here they gave me an interesting account of how a witch can take precautions against discovery. She takes her familiar, say the ghost of a murderer or suicide, with her to an ant-hill and there she 'binds its mouth' by removing some of the earth from the hill and uttering charms. She says to the ghost, 'When the Siraha questions you, do not disclose my name'. Then she replaces the earth. It is believed that, just as any earth that is removed from an ant-hill is automatically filled up the next day, so misfortune will enter the house of the ghost she has bound if it betrays her.

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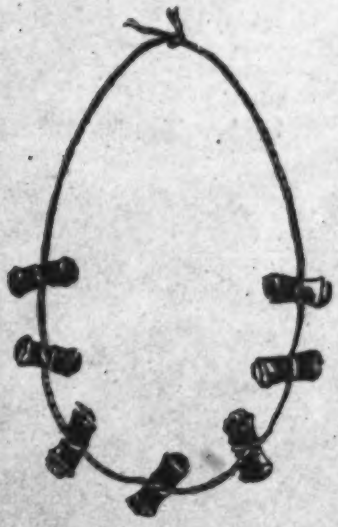

Charm against disease, made of small bits of chicken-bone.

Dread of this witchcraft or enchantment is a very powerful factor driving men to violence, for the fear is still a live one and the dangers are supposed to be great. Guma Hunga left his home and village because he believed that his family was being bewitched by a man called Burgi. A year afterwards he saw his enemy in the new village to which he had moved, and murdered him in a sudden access

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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754 683 of fear. Sori Bhima killed a neighbour Kosa, who suffered from yaws, believing him to be a wizard and responsible for the death of his children.

Vedta Sukra murdered his uncle Kola, the headman of Surguda, for being a wizard. Three years before, Sukra's three-year old daughter had died, and the cause had been diagnosed as Kola's magic. Immediately before the tragedy, Sukra's little son died after a month's illness, and members of the family went to a Siraha at Sarjiguda to find out why. The Siraha invoked the deity Madin Deo onto his person, and the deity declared through him that the death was the result of Kola's magic. The next day Sukra went with a number of villagers to the place where his child had been cremated. Heaps of rice were placed in front of the ashes, in the names of Mirchuk (which kills children), the Village Mother, the Departed, Bhagavan and the suspect Kola. A chicken was allowed to make its choice among the heaps, and it pecked up rice from those of Mirchuk and Kola. From this the people deduced that Kola had killed the child with the help of Mirchuk Deo.

The following day Kola was found lying dead in a pool of blood on his own thrashing-floor. Sukra admitted his crime and no doubt considered that his action was justified and indeed laudable.

754 578 One day the sago palm belonging to Hunga of Gudse village ceased to give the usual juice. Hunga went to the village Siraha, a young man called Kosa, to find out what was the matter, and received the reply that it was due to the magic of Pandru, one of the neighbours. Sometime later, Pandru and Kosa met in the local liquor shop and had a drink together, and presently Kosa accused Pandru to his face of doing magic against Hunga's tree. Pandru became very angry at this, and abused Kosa and his gods. Expressing himself in typical Maria fashion, he pulled out a few of his pubic hairs and threw them on Kosa's head. Kosa slapped Pandru's face twice and went away.

Nothing happened for five months. But then on the evening of 14 April 1922, Kosa went out to look for a straying cow. His way took him near Pandru's house who, when he

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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saw his enemy, got out his bow and arrow and shot him in the stomach.[1]

III

## THE POWER OF BLOOD

The belief in the magical power of blood is world-wide, and has been so fully studied that I need only briefly refer to it here. Its virtues are imparted by the blood-covenant, by drinking, by bathing in it and by being baptized in it. Charms against sickness are sometimes written in blood in China. The blood bath was believed to be a cure for leprosy down to the Middle Ages; the idea even occurs in Grimm's fairy-tales where leprosy is treated by a bath of the blood of innocent maidens. Constantine the Great was advised to bathe in the blood of virgin children to cure an illness, but the parents' cries dissuaded him and he was miraculously healed instead.

'In the past', says Halkerwal, 'the custom of human sacrifice was common in India chiefly amongst the Dravidians. One of its forms was Purusamedha, which was celebrated for the attainment of supremacy over all created beings and at which eleven human beings and eleven barren cows were offered up. The Puranas and Tantras also contain frequent references to Narabali or human sacrifice to the goddess Chandika. These Tantrik sacrifices to Kali or Chandika were formerly common. People were freely offered in the days of Maharatta rule, and in Western India there are many temples existing even today at which such sacrifices were common only a century ago. In the North-East of India also human sacrifice to Kali was very common'.[2]

Crooke gives a number of modern examples. 'In 1870, a Mohammedan butcher losing his child was told by a Hindu

[1] This fear of witchcraft is by no means confined to the aboriginals. In 1931, a Gwara schoolmaster in the Central Provinces lost several of his cattle and his children fell ill. He traced the cause to a Powar sorcerer. He dressed up in a green skirt, green shirt, green cap, and put bells on his feet to make himself appear like his goddess and killed the sorcerer with a trident from the village temple. In 1935, some Hindus killed a Gond medicine-man in the Amraoti District because he threw a charmed lemon (believed to be infected with disease) into their compound. In Mandla District in 1935, a Mohammedan Sub-Inspector of Police, believing a Panka woman had "overlooked" his child, sent his constables to force her to remove the charm. She was beaten with castor plants, made to drink water from a Chamar's shoe and subjected to other indignities.

[2] Halkerwal, op. cit., p. 66.